

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the above-identified application are respectfully requested. Claims 1-4, 6 and 8-16 are now pending, wherein claims 1, 8 and 9 have been amended, and claims 5 and 7 have been canceled.

Applicant notes with appreciation the Examiner's acknowledgement of Applicant's claim for foreign priority, and the Examiner's consideration of the documents cited in the Information Disclosure Statement filed on February 14, 2001.

In the third paragraph of the Office Action, claims 1-6, 9-12, and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,159,434 to Gonjo et al. ("Gonjo") in view of German Patent Document No. DE 197 43 673 ("Schuessler")¹. In the fourth paragraph of the Office Action claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Gonjo in view of Schuessler. In the fifth paragraph of the Office Action claims 7, 13, 14, and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Gonjo in view of Schuessler and U.S. Patent No. 5,209,906 to Watkins et al. ("Watkins"). These grounds of rejection are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the elements of claims 5 and 7. To reject Applicant's claim 7, the Office Action relies upon a combination of Gonjo, Schuessler and Watkins. However, the combination of Gonjo, Schuessler and Watkins does not disclose or suggest all of the elements of Applicant's amended

¹ Applicant notes that the header of the rejection only references claims 1-3, 6, 11, 12 and 15, while the body of the rejection discusses claims 1-6, 9-12 and 15. Accordingly, Applicant will respond as if the header of the rejection references claims 1-6, 9-12 and 15.

claim 1. Specifically, the combination of Gonjo, Schuessler and Watkins does not disclose or suggest a system for heating or converting at least one medium comprising layers which “are arranged between a lower end plate and an upper end plate, and insulating plates are provided between the end plates and layers which are respectively adjacent to the end plates” as recited in Applicant’s claim 1.

The Office Action acknowledges that Gonjo and Schuessler each do not disclose or suggest insulating plates being provided between the end plates and layers which are respectively adjacent to the end plates. To remedy this deficiency of the combination of Gonjo and Schuessler, the Office Action relies upon Watkins.

Watkins discloses a modular isothermal reactor. As illustrated in Fig. 1, the modular isothermal reactor 10 includes a number of components, such as a heat exchange section 11 and a reaction section 12, interposed between end plates 18. However, Watkins does not disclose or suggest that insulating plates are provided between end plates 18 and layers which are respectively adjacent to the end plates 18.

Nevertheless, the Office Action relies upon Fig. 5 of Watkins as disclosing or suggesting insulating plates being provided between the end plates and layers which are respectively adjacent to the end plates. Fig. 5 of Watkins “is an exploded side view of the reaction section of a second embodiment of the modular isothermal reactor.” (Column 4, lines 37-40). The Office Action states that end plates 86 and 87 of Watkins correspond to the end plates recited in Applicant’s

claims, and that insulator plates 74 and 84 correspond to the insulating plates recited in Applicant's claims. However, Applicant's claim 1 recites a system in which "the layers are arranged between a lower end plate and an upper end plate." In contrast, the end plates in Fig. 5 of Watkins are end plates of just the reaction section and not of the modular isothermal reactor. Additionally, although Watkins discloses elements 74 as an insulator plate, Watkins merely describes element 84 as a gasket, and not as an insulator plate as stated in the Office Action. Accordingly, the insulator plate 74 and gasket 84 of the reaction section of the modular isothermal reactor of Watkins cannot correspond to the insulating plates recited in Applicant's claim 1, which are provided between the end plate and the layers which are respectively adjacent to the end plates.

Because the combination of Gonjo, Schuessler and Watkins does not disclose or suggest all of the elements of Applicant's claim 1, the combination cannot render Applicant's claim 1 unpatentable. Claims 2-4, 6 and 8-16 variously depend from Applicant's claim 1, and are, therefore, patentably distinguishable over the combination of Gonjo, Schuessler and Watkins for at least those reasons stated above with regard to Applicant's claim 1.


For at least those reasons stated above, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of Applicant's claim 1-4, 6 and 8-16 be withdrawn.

If there are any questions regarding this Request or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #011210.49153US).

Respectfully submitted,

November 16, 2004



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